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# **CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION**

**A Paper Read at the International  
Pool Conference, Regina,  
June 1928**

**AND**

## **WHAT TO READ ON CO-OPERATION**

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MANITOBA WHEAT POOL  
Winnipeg, 1928**

*(Second Impression)*





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## Co-operative Education

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I HAVE to deal with a very big subject in a very short space of time. It will, therefore, be understood that I am merely sketching a few ideas touching the fundamentals of the subject.

What do we mean when we talk of co-operative education? The words themselves imply that we do not mean education in general, but education which has some specific reference to the principles and practice of co-operation. At the outset, therefore, we must know what we mean by co-operation and by education. For our purpose we may define education as the equipping of the individual to live the fullest possible life. The ardent co-operator might at this point interject the remark that that was a good enough definition of co-operative education. I would agree with him, but obviously it is necessary that we should have a definition of co-operation which would relate it to some conception of the fullest possible life.

In its simplest form co-operation means working together. That definition is altogether too vague for our purpose. Men will combine for all kinds of purposes, and it would not be an abuse of language to call their efforts co-operative. A joint stock company is co-operative in a sense; so is an army; but co-operators, generally speaking, have little use for joint stock companies and probably less use for armies. I notice in a co-operative review a strong protest against certain institutions which are being formed in the Old Country and which call themselves co-operative investment trusts. Their objective seems to be to pool risks in speculative investment and they claim to be genuinely co-operative, which in a sense, they probably are. Men, as I have said, may join together to do anything or anybody. Co-operation to us, as co-operators, therefore, is not merely associated effort in a common purpose. We must go beyond the dictionary. Let us look at the modern co-operative movement historically.

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It began about the beginning of the 19th century when small societies were formed for the purpose of encouraging saving and thrift among the poorer classes of people and, on this continent at least, for the purpose of providing employment for unemployed workers. About the same time there began the great democratic movement and also the teaching of what may be called the system of labor economics. The founders of the latter applied the principles of political justice to economic conditions. They claimed that labor was the source of all wealth and that the unequal distribution of wealth was due to the separation of the producers from the product of their toil; of the worker from the work. If the two were combined; if the worker had the capital and consequently the ownership of the instruments of production then he would own the entire product of his labor and economic injustice would be abolished. We had, therefore, at this period: (1) Voluntary association for mutual benefit; (2) a movement for political equality; (3) a searching intellectual scrutiny of economic organization.

### **A New Social Order**

In the middle of the second decade of the 19th century Robert Owen put forward his plan primarily for the relief of unemployment, namely, the establishment of villages of co-operation. A village of co-operation was a territorial area occupied by a community cultivating the land and conducting industrial operations as a communal enterprise. The capital for these communities in Owen's first plan was to come from the government; in later suggestions, from philanthropic individuals or institutions. Owen knew that the people he was speaking for were not capable of administering the affairs of such communities, and he stressed the importance of education; not merely the imparting of knowledge, but the formation, through special and direct training, of character. Men, Owen believed, had to be trained not only to think but to act, and he was somewhat dogmatic on the pliability of the human character in the early stages of life. It is important to understand, however, that he did not exactly believe that you could make anything you like out of a human being by a special system

of training, but that human beings collectively would respond to the influence of proper moral training and character forming. Societies, collectively, he said in effect, are the product of the form of training and the cultural tendencies of the age, and these can be so directed as to change completely the character of the society, and in consequence, the character of the individual. Owen, therefore, had in mind a new and a better social order created by direct training of the individual accompanied by a specially created form of environment. His aim, in fact, was a new order based on social justice.

Others asked: Why not organize the purchasing power of the masses through societies, selling the necessities of life which all had to have, and use the profits to furnish capital for establishing local communities, such as those advocated by Owen? That was the plan strongly and eloquently advocated by another co-operative pioneer, Dr. William King, a Brighton physician. He was firmly convinced that by this means the masses of the people could abolish pauperism and crime and achieve a position of comfort, contentment and independence. Only one thing stood in the way of realizing this enviable condition—ignorance—and so it was necessary to give the people access to useful knowledge and train them in sound moral principles. Dr. King also had in view a new social order.

Then we come to the Rochdale Pioneers. They set on a firm and endurable basis the co-operative store, but they had more in mind than a store. Their plan was to raise capital with which to accomplish certain things and among them was to "arrange the powers of production, distribution, education and government." This was a very large order and they knew it, so they decided to set apart a portion of their profits for educational purposes. The Rochdale Pioneers also had in mind a new social order to be reached by men working together for that particular purpose.

I have selected these examples for the special purpose of showing that the co-operative movement from the beginning was not merely a business proposition, but a specific method of realizing a definite social philosophy in a new social order. If, then, as co-operators we desire a new

social order it must be because we are not satisfied with the existing order. Why? Is it not because we believe it is not possible in the existing order for the individual to realize the best that is in him, in other words, to realize the purpose of education. We find among the mass of the people discontent and dissatisfaction which arise from a sense of exploitation. The producer believes that the fruits of his labor pass to others who derive a greater benefit from it. He has a feeling of injustice; a feeling that the economic order in some way robs him of the value of the equality gained in the political order. The existing system accentuates the disproportion between human needs and satisfactions on the one hand and democratic ideals of equality on the other. Our wants increase along with the sense of a right to share in the satisfactions created by social effort; the existing economic order does not recognize the right.

### **A Challenge to the Existing Order**

We have here both the economic and the psychological explanation of the great development of agricultural co-operation on this continent, and like co-operation everywhere, it is a challenge to the existing order because the existing order fails to satisfy ideals of democracy and justice. Here, as elsewhere, we face this problem: In a world producing more utilities and creating greater comforts than ever before, how can we secure that equality in enjoyment and the increase in happiness which will satisfy the prevailing sense of right and justice. If co-operation had no solution for that problem it would deserve no more consideration than any other of the transient modes of economic organization. It would be merely another way of doing business, and unfortunately I am afraid that to many in our movement co-operation is but a way of doing business. The research department of a religious organization in the United States made an extensive investigation into the social and educational activities of a large number of agricultural co-operatives. The larger number were frankly commercial. We are for business only, and do not bother with educational or social work, said most of them. "This is a creamery, not a church," said one manager, and his reply was typical of hundreds. Some Old

Country co-operators who know what the pioneers of the movement visualized may smile, but I have known Old Country co-operators myself and I know that more of them look at the quarterly dividends than at the idealism of the leaders in the movement. Of course, it is possible to have a successful co-operative institution based entirely on economic ideas, that is, a successful business enterprise, but that is not the be-all and end-all of co-operation. Co-operation provides a solution of the problem I have stated. It is a challenge to the existing order. As co-operators we challenge its basis, self-interest; we challenge its incentive, the making of profit; we challenge its method, competition, and we deprecate its results—wealth for the few and poverty for the many. We challenge it because we believe it starves both the body and the spirit. To self-interest, we oppose the common good; to the profit motive, the motive of service; to competition, working together, “each for all and all for each,” and to wealth for the few and poverty for the many we oppose the ideal of the Co-operative Commonwealth with neither extreme of wealth nor extreme of poverty.

Co-operation is the antithesis of the capitalist system and the co-operator who is afraid to say without equivocation that he is out to build a new order of society by the instrument of voluntary association, has not learned the lesson of co-operation. And the building of a new order of society demands a new outlook on life. The development of that new outlook on life is the purpose of co-operative education, and that does not mean simply the dissemination of knowledge. At the bottom co-operation is not an intellectual process; the principle of mutual aid runs through all the evolution of life and co-operation was a practice aeons before it became an idea. Co-operation is primarily a feeling, an inclination, a passion, and co-operative education should be directed towards giving intellectual support to the passion. The co-operator must have not only a desire for knowledge, but a passion for social justice; he needs not only light but warmth. We have to develop both intelligence and character.

We may define co-operative education, then, as the application of a body of associated ideas to the intelligent direction of social evolution toward an order of social

justice. We have to stimulate an interest in the ideals we profess and a desire to realize them. We must induce people to get to know certain things, to want to do certain things, and to bring about certain things—to know, to do, to realize. What then should be the programme of co-operative education? Do co-operators demand merely a technical training in the particular co-operative enterprise? Is it possible, in fact, to promote co-operative ideals, principles and even practices on a specialized training? I am firmly convinced it is not, nor in the older co-operative movement, at least, has co-operation ever been understood in that way. It has always included the cultural side of life, and as agricultural co-operators we have only to turn to Denmark to discover that the firmest possible basis for co-operation is a cultural basis. A co-operator should, of course, understand the working of a co-operative enterprise, but to be a convinced co-operator, one who will stand by the movement and the enterprise in time of storm and stress, he must have faith in the ideals, that means, he must know much more than the special character of co-operation as a business enterprise.

### **An Educational Programme**

I would map out a plan of co-operative education something like this:

(1) The history of the movement. Men must know not only how co-operation came as a system, but why it came. That means some knowledge of the origin and development of society itself, because co-operation is at the very roots of society. There is also needed a knowledge of the development of industrial society and how the users of the tools of production came to be separated from the owners; the evolution of modern industry, the rise of the capitalist system and machine production. For farmers especially there is a great lesson in the long history of the oppression of the workers on the land. The co-operator should know something of associated effort, ancient, medieval and modern; the origin and development of friendly societies for various social purposes; the separation of the land worker from the land, the formation of guilds, trade unions, and other institutions of a kindred

character. The co-operator ought to know that the desire to associate for mutual benefit is for all practical purposes as old as humanity itself, and that associated effort of one kind or another appears in every stage of human history.

The lives and work of reformers provide always interesting and instructive reading, and we can perhaps make the study of history less tedious by approaching it through biography. In any case it is a stimulation and encouragement to know of the lives of men and women who have given the best they had to the cause of the people. The co-operator should be acquainted with the general development of the co-operative philosophy and ought to be able to apply it to economic and social problems. The problems of modern society are very difficult; life does not appear to us as simple as it did to reformers of one hundred years ago. It is well for the co-operator to have a standard to which to refer when confronted with the practical problems of the day, and the philosophy of co-operation is such a standard. It is not a panacea; it is a guide. The relation of co-operation to the general democratic movement should also be understood. Co-operation began on this continent in much the same way as it began elsewhere, namely, in efforts of workers to save by organizing their purchasing power and also for producing in common. In 1806 a co-operative boot and shoe factory was established in Philadelphia by unemployed boot makers, and a contemporary account said it was "a striking evidence that they had become acquainted with the only means of securing a just reward for their labor." That is a significant statement for the time in which it was made. There is need, I believe, for a searching inquiry into the beginnings of co-operation on this continent.

(2) Economics. The co-operator should, I suppose, know something of the science of economics, because it is the science of human effort applied to natural resources for the satisfaction of human needs. Most co-operators, I have found, however, get disgusted with economics because it discovers so many things which to them are not so. I am certain the pioneers of co-operation knew little about the science of economics and cared less about it. They were more concerned with the art of making the best of life. It

is not without significance that the movement began in an atmosphere of unqualified individualism, when self-interest was regarded as the mainspring of progress, when "hands off business" was regarded as the best public policy and survival of the fittest was the plausible excuse for poverty, misery, and injustice. Even today our farmers' co-operatives, in the eyes of the supporters of the capitalist competitive system, are condemned in the name of economic laws which some people seem to believe are as fixed and inexorable as nature itself. Supply and demand means the same thing to them as that two and two make four.

(3) Citizenship. The co-operator should be acquainted with political science—the state, its origin and place in social development and the relation of the individual and his institution to the state. I regard this as important because our movement itself is one which is intimately connected with ideas about the state. There is much questioning today of the old ideas of what the English philosopher Hobbes, called "The great Leviathan." There is a school which regards the state as simply an association among associations; comprehensive and powerful but still an association, whose value is determined by the usefulness of its function; which looks upon association within the state as a necessary means of enabling the individual to take a larger part in the duties of citizenship and would allow to associations a greater part in the development of social enterprise. This is an important viewpoint for co-operative associations. It would give to them a larger sphere of usefulness and thus perhaps solve some of those problems of social ownership and operation which deal with services which are not monopolies. Moreover, the theory of the omnipotent and omni-competent state, a state which knows no law above itself and which can do anything it pleases, has been fruitful of mischief and remains today the greatest obstacle to the outlawing of war. I am sorry I have not the time to pursue further this absorbing subject.

With citizenship I would, of course, include ethics, and by ethics I mean the actual institutions, rules, regulations, customs, and folkways, and so on, which men have devised for the discipline of social life.

(4) Co-operative management and administration. Co-operators by conviction should be entrusted with the direction of co-operative enterprise. The movement should rear within itself the technicians for the conduct of co-operative business, no matter what the business is. There is always a danger to the enterprise if it is controlled or directed by men who are in it merely for the salary paid them because they possess some particular kind of knowledge. Administrators and technicians are made by training and if they are trained in the capitalistic school it is highly probable that they will be influenced by capitalistic ideas and guided by capitalistic habits acquired in capitalistic methods. The co-operative movement needs administrators and technicians whose hearts and minds both are in the movement, and it can only get them by taking them from the movement and training them itself.

Briefly then, co-operative education should include such general education as is necessary to give a cultural basis to the co-operative outlook; a knowledge of the place of co-operation in social evolution; an understanding of how the co-operative methods can be made to fit into the economic organization and transform it and a training in the particular technique of co-operative enterprise. How is this programme of co-operative education to be carried out.

### **Conducting Co-operative Education**

The method of conducting education within the movement is obviously conditioned by circumstances. A practicable method in one set of circumstances may not be practicable in another set. In populous centres it is comparatively easy to organize classes and carry out a regular curriculum. That method is not so easy in rural areas, especially where the area is as large as on this continent. Experiments are being tried in holding schools for a short period of time in rural districts, and if the response warrants it, no doubt a plan will be worked out to cover a fairly extensive area. The summer school for those directly interested in the work of co-operatives has come into existence on this continent following the example of the older countries, but these schools are principally

occupied with the technique of co-operative business, although, of course, they fill an important function.

For the members of our agricultural co-operatives we must rely largely upon the written word. The co-operative movement ought to have its own press, and individual societies ought to have some medium of communication with their membership. The three western Wheat Pools have each a press medium of contact with the membership through which the members are kept informed of matters relating to the associations. In addition all three use an agency which is of great value where a membership scattered over a large territory has to be reached, namely, the radio. Talks over the radio may be made to cover the whole field of co-operative education. In Manitoba the Agricultural College tried giving a complete course in a single phase of agriculture, and I understand, with gratifying success. We have not yet tried that plan, but we have it in mind.

In adult education, however, nothing can take the place of a well selected library to which the membership has easy access. The Manitoba Pool has such an educational library containing works on sociology, economics, history, science, literature and co-operation. Fiction we have left to other agencies, except for a small collection which is maintained for the use of Pool patients in Winnipeg hospitals.

It should be understood that in all three of our prairie provinces the farmers have a separate educational body which deals with all matters affecting the social and economic side of agriculture. With these organizations the Pools work in close co-operation.

### **Co-operation in the Schools**

One more question remains to be considered — the teaching of co-operation in the schools. Agricultural co-operation does form part of the course in our agricultural colleges, but there is quite a demand for direct instruction in co-operative principles in the elementary and high schools. I understand a text book of co-operation has been prepared for use in high schools in the United States, but I imagine that it is intended for rural high schools and deals prin-

cipally, if not altogether, with the practical and technical side of the movement. I doubt if public opinion is yet ripe enough to stand for a text-book in which co-operation as a social philosophy is set forth.

I doubt also if it is at all possible to have co-operation directly taught in our elementary schools. It is, of course, possible in teaching to separate co-operation as a mode of life or a way of doing things from co-operation as a commercial enterprise, and such separation should be rigidly observed in any effort to create the co-operative attitude of mind in children. Such teaching should come under the heading of morals and civics and be directed always to emphasizing the moral qualities of friendliness, goodwill, neighborliness, tolerance, and peace, working upwards from the simple practice of helping each other, through examples of team work in play and work to the larger issues of life, including the substitution of peaceful arbitration for war in settling disputes between nations.

Those of you who have made any study of psycho-analysis will know that deep down in the human mind, the psycho-analysts find a force which seems to stand out as an ultimate factor of the mind. Some call it the "censor"; some call it "community sentiment"; hypnotizers call it "personal inhibition," old-fashioned people call it "conscience." Whatever the name, it stands for a force which will prevent even a hypnotized person from doing under suggestion that which he in a normal state believes to be wrong. It may be that the "censor" is our accumulated heritage of moral discipline and the bond which holds society together while going through the endless process of change. And, I ask you, what could be a stronger element in that heritage than the primary need of men for each other, a need which lies at the very root of all co-operation. May that need also not be the explanation of that sense of injustice which makes men resist exploitation and the sense of equality which makes them turn to mutual aid for relief. And if that be so, may we not say that the co-operative movement is based on the most fundamental of all human feelings and that the purpose of co-operative education is to unite this feeling, with the intellect and will for the achievement of a social ideal.

# What to Read on Co-operation?

(By J. T. Hull.)

IT is a perennial complaint in the co-operative press that co-operators do not evince any great desire to keep in touch with their movement through its own literature. There are certainly good grounds for the complaint, if numbers be taken as the criterion, for the sales of books on co-operation and the circulation of co-operative periodicals become almost insignificant when placed alongside the world membership of co-operative institutions.

I do not think, however, that in this respect the co-operative movement is in worse shape than other movements. Few periodicals which make demands upon the intellect achieve substantial circulation, and he would be an optimist indeed who looked for a work on economics to be listed as the season's best seller!

Apart from the disinclination (or should it be disability?) in the mass of the people to incur mental effort, there is perhaps another reason and a compensatory one for the apparent neglect by co-operators of their own literature.

Co-operation is fundamentally one phase of the great democratic movement which began in the early part of the 19th century. It is part and parcel of the movement which has as its aim a more equitable distribution of wealth and the development of the capacity of self-government. The founders of the co-operative movement had a more ambitious programme than the introduction of a new way of doing business; they regarded co-operation as a means of achieving an economic transformation, not only in exchange but in the production and distribution of wealth and the earliest co-operative enterprises were established expressly for the purpose of raising capital through the purchasing power of the working classes, this capital to be used in giving the workers themselves control of the instruments of production. The founders of the co-operative movement were social reformers. Robert Owen, who is generally credited with being the founder of the modern movement,

was somewhat contemptuous of the co-operative store. He had in mind such a transformation of society as would place the producer in control, and it was in his school that the word "socialism" was first used. Even the Rochdale pioneers, in formulating the objects of their store, declared among other things "that as soon as practicable this society shall proceed to arrange the power of production, distribution, education and government; or in other words to establish a self-supporting home colony of united interests or assist other societies in establishing such colonies." Surely an ambitious platform! We have, therefore, to look at the co-operative movement as a wing of the great army of militant democracy, and because of this it will be found that the co-operative movement is included in literature which does not deal with co-operation as a special subject. We should, therefore, deal with the question of co-operative literature according to the place of the movement in the larger movement of social reform.

### **The Industrial Revolution**

To get a foundation for understanding the rise and progress of the modern co-operative movement it is necessary to understand something of the intellectual and political ferment on both sides of the Atlantic at the beginning of the nineteenth century under the influence of the American and French revolutions and the economic conditions caused by the industrial revolution. First, let us look at Europe. Up to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries economic life in Western Europe was in a sense communal; the centre was the village, almost a self-contained society, under a lord. The law was custom interpreted by the manorial court; the economic system was domestic and the life co-operative. The system had its roots deep in the past and the belief, not even yet dispelled, that in its beginnings existed all that was meant by liberty, equality and fraternity, was not only the mainstay of communistic ideas, but the reason for so many reformers claiming that their demands simply meant the restoration of an order which had been destroyed by selfishness, avarice and tyranny.

This economic and political order was extinguished by profit-seeking. Even while the school-men and philosophers debated seriously whether interest and profit were justifiable either by natural, moral or divine law, the world around them was being transformed by the driving force of personal gain. "Everything turned to profit. The towns had their profitable dirt, their profitable smoke, their profitable slums, their profitable disorder, their profitable ignorance, their profitable despair." The village worker was forced into the towns by the land-owners who stole from him the land he held on customary tenure, and in the towns he was forced into the disease-breeding and soul-destroying slums by the new capitalism which made profit the sole end of human life.

### **The Reform Movement**

Against this new society men who saw in human beings something more than profit-creating machines placed a huge question mark. "Who creates these profits?" they asked, and the reply laid the foundation for the movement which maintained that labor—all useful labor whether of mind or muscle—was the creator of value. Co-operation was part of that movement.

The earliest connected account of the beginning of English labor economics is in Anton Menger's "The Right to the Whole Produce of Labor," but unfortunately the book has long been out of print and, considering its value, it is inexplicable why the publishers do not reprint it. However, an even better book is M. Beer's "History of English Socialism," which comes right down to the modern labor movement. Here we have an excellent resume of the doctrines of the early reformers—Paine, Spence, Ogilvie, Hodgkin, Bray, Thompson, Owen and others, with the early co-operative movement fitted into its intellectual and chronological place.

And just one word about Robert Owen. It is difficult for us today to realize clearly the place and work of Owen in the democratic movement on both sides of the Atlantic. He was no wild-eyed advocate of equality, and he realized that liberty carried with it responsibilities that the masses of his day were not competent to carry. The important thing to remember about him is that he was a social re-

former in the fullest sense of the word and that every movement for the improvement of life and the advancement of society had him for its champion. He advocated popular non-sectarian schools; factory regulation; restriction of child labor; expenditure on public works to absorb the unemployed; regulation of the drink traffic; freedom of speech; political reform; co-operation. Above all he urged that education was essential to human progress; that the avenues to knowledge should be open to all, and that as a man's character was the product of his environment, so, through education, would the environment be changed and humanity achieve happiness and contentment.

We are not so optimistic today, but Owen spent all that he earned by a commanding business ability in serving humanity. The first co-operative paper—*The Economist*—was issued by Robert Owen and George Mudie in 1821. Its purpose was to advocate "a plan for improving the condition of the working classes during their continuance at their present employment," and it explains that the plan was "unrestrained co-operation on the part of all the members for every purpose of social life."

What Owen believed in can be gathered from "The Life of Robert Owen" written by himself; from the excellent little book "Robert Owen," by Joseph McCabe, or the authoritative biography, "Robert Owen," by Frank Podmore. One of the best sympathetically critical studies is "Robert Owen," by G. D. H. Cole, who of all the writers on Owen is the best able to judge the man, his ideas and his work.

For the period a highly commendable book is "Life and Labor in the Nineteenth Century," by C. R. Fay, an earnest student of co-operation. This is a book every co-operator should read together with the same author's "Co-operation at Home and Abroad," which tells practically all that the average person wants to know about the co-operative movement in Europe. The co-operative movement is also dealt with in Professor Fay's recently issued book "Great Britain from Adam Smith to the Present Day."

### The Beginnings of Co-operation

Having got an idea of the setting for the co-operative movement in England, the student should turn to T. W. Mercer's "Dr. William King and the Co-operator." Dr. King was a Brighton physician who believed that if the workers capitalized their purchasing power there was nothing to stop them becoming the owners as well as the users of the instruments of production. He issued 28 numbers of a paper called "The Co-operator," in which he urged the establishment of co-operative stores, the surplus earnings of which were to be used to improve the condition of the people and root out pauperism and crime. These issues of the Co-operator are reprinted in Mr. Mercer's biography.

G. J. Holyoake's "Self-Help a Hundred Years Ago," and his "History of Co-operation" (now out of print), written about forty years ago, tell of early co-operative enterprises, and an extremely interesting book dealing with the origin and development of guilds, fraternal and benefit societies, co-operative enterprises and trade unions, is M. Fothergill Robinson's "The Spirit of Association." The various kinds of friendly societies are dealt with in J. M. Baerneither's "English Associations of Working Men."

Co-operative production was vigorously urged by the Christian Socialists, that body of men in the forties and fifties of last century who believed that it was the business of Christians to establish the Kingdom of God on this earth, and who set about to do it through the medium of co-operative workshops in which the workers were not only to achieve economic independence but to develop those qualities of character which are essential to good citizenship and the practice of self-government. Their point of view may be inferred from the statement of F. D. Maurice in the first tract they issued, that anyone who recognizes the principles of co-operation as stronger and truer than those of competition is justly called a Socialist. The Christian Socialist movement may be read about in A. B. Woodnorth's "Christian Socialism in England," and in "Christian Socialism," by Rev. M. Kaufman. There is an excellent chapter in Prof. Seligman's recently published "Essays in Economics." Co-operative production by and of itself was

not a success. Its history is recounted in "Co-operative Production," by Ben Jones. This is rather a large work, however, being in two volumes, and for the ordinary reader the account of the movement given in the two books mentioned on Christian Socialism may be enough.

### **Consumer's Co-operation**

The modern consumer's co-operative store dates from 1844, when the Rochdale pioneers opened their little store in Toad Lane, Rochdale, or rather (as tradition has it), when the wife of one of them opened it to shame the men who hesitated because of the crowd of scoffers outside. The pioneers had some very ambitious ideals, but today their reputation rests upon the fact that they started a movement which will never die, and introduced a practice which made co-operation appeal to the purse as well as the mind. The co-operative store of the Rochdale pioneers is still in existence and is doing well, but the real monument of those twenty-eight Lancashire weavers is the world-wide co-operative movement of today. Their ambitions and their performances are recounted in George Jacob Holyoake's "The History of the Rochdale Pioneers," but an account will be found in every work which touches upon the co-operative movement. Percy Redfern in "The Story of the C. W. S." (Co-operative Wholesale Society) treats interestingly of the beginnings of the movement and carries the story of its development and national co-ordination down to 1912. The book also contains some valuable economic charts and tables. An interesting recent book is "A Century of London Co-operation," by W. Henry Brown.

### **The American Movement**

Coming now to this side of the Atlantic, we find that co-operative pioneering took the same form as in England. There were isolated enterprises long before there was any articulate movement. As far back as 1794 a co-operative boot and shoe factory was established by workers in Baltimore, and in 1806 a similar co-operative was begun in Philadelphia by unemployed cordwainers. In the twenties of last century farmers and mechanics combined to establish warehouses for goods which were purchased at wholesale

and retailed at cost to those contributing to the purchasing fund. One striking feature of the early American movement is its thoroughness in facing the economic problem. An early writer puts it thus: Employers control wages; middlemen control prices; bankers control credit and landlords control rents; through co-operation the actual producers could control all these economic factors and build for themselves a better life. Co-operative production, co-operative distribution, co-operative credit and co-operative land holding provided fruitful themes for discussion in New England long before anyone heard of a patronage dividend.

There is a vast field for research in these beginnings of co-operation in America. It is covered to some extent in the "History of Labor in the United States," by J. R. Commons and associates, a magistral work in its sphere. It deals with the beginnings, the associationist movement (the co-operative community idea for which America was the world's experimental station), the introduction of the Rochdale system and the co-operative enterprises of industrial and agricultural organizations, giving a good general view of the place of co-operation in the thought and life of the mass of the working population during the nineteenth century.

Dealing specifically with co-operation mainly from the forties on, there is a volume in the Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science containing six studies: "Co-operation in New England" and "Co-operation in the Middle States," by Edward W. Bemis; "Co-operation in the Northwest," by Albert Shaw; "Three Phases of Co-operation in the West," by Amos G. Warner; "Co-operation on the Pacific Coast," by Charles Howard Shinn; "Co-operation in Maryland and the South," by Daniel R. Randall.

### **Co-operation and Socialism**

The literature so far mentioned shows developing side by side in the middle of last century on both sides of the Atlantic the consumers' co-operative movement, the producers' co-operative movement and the great labor movement, the latter being divided into the trades union movement and the socialist movement. In this connection it is

imperative to remember that British socialism has a history of its own, and, one might say, was a socialism into which it was quite easy to fit both the principles and the practice of co-operation. Following Karl Marx, however, a school of socialism arose which looked with considerable scorn upon the co-operative movement. They regarded it as a kind of bourgeois shop-keeping which could be relied upon to make the workers content with their lot and to care nothing about the revolution as long as they had savings in the store. Their attitude was summed up by the French socialist, Jules Guesde, who said, "Socialists are not prepared to sell themselves for a mess of pottage."

For a time, therefore, the socialists were divided with regard to the value of co-operation, but in 1867-68 the socialist international endorsed the co-operative movement, and went so far as to declare that the way for producers to obtain possession of the implements of production was through co-operative societies and the organization of mutual credit systems. In other words, co-operation was to be the way for the workers to secure control of the entire economic system. Many Marxian socialists today still hold that co-operation is a hindrance to socialism and that it represents a tendency to revert to an obsolete social type, but in the main the socialist movement regards the co-operative movement as part of itself. Hence the Fabian Society has published a series of essays with the title "Fabian Essays on Co-operation," and in "A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain," Sydney and Beatrice Webb open the book with a discussion of the place of co-operation in the modern economic system. They have also published a book, "The Consumers' Co-operative Movement," which is not a history of the movement but a descriptive analysis of its present position, with a survey of its relation to other manifestations of democracy and of its possibilities for the future. "A History of Socialist Thought," by Harry W. Laidler, published a few months ago, contains a section on the co-operative movement and its relation to other social movements and an interesting chapter on the co-operative community movement in the United States. In connection with this last, one name ought to be mentioned—Horace Greeley, doughty

opponent of all slavery, which he defined as "that condition in which one human being exists mainly as a convenience for other human beings" and the man who, perhaps more than any other individual in the United States, planted constructive ideas of democracy among the masses and turned the minds of farmers and industrial workers to co-operation as one means of improving their economic condition.

What co-operators themselves believe to be the future of co-operation, especially in relation to the state, may be learned from Dr. J. P. Warbasse's "Co-operative Democracy," or his smaller book "What is Co-operation," or Ernest Poisson's "The Co-operative Republic." Special mention should be made of Professor Charles Gide's "Consumers' Co-operative Societies." Professor Gide is one of the leaders of French co-operation, and he has been identified with the movement for over half a century. His book outlines the history and practice of co-operation in many lands, and he gives an excellent exposition of the philosophy of co-operation and the relation of the co-operative movement to the Socialist movement. The American edition contains an interesting chapter on co-operation in the United States from the pen of Dr. Warbasse.

### **Co-operation Among Farmers**

Every farmers' movement on this continent has included co-operation among its purposes. In the Declaration of Purposes issued by the Patrons of Husbandry in 1874 the following paragraph occurs: "We propose meeting together, talking together, working together, buying together, selling together, and, in general, acting together for our mutual protection, and advancement, as occasion may require."

That is about the clearest, most easily understood and yet the most comprehensive definition of co-operation, I have come across. For the co-operative enterprises of farmers' organizations the following may be consulted: "The Granger Movement," by Solon Justus Buck; "The Farm Bureau Movement," by O. M. Kile; "Agricultural Organizations in the United States," by Edward Wiest.

There is a popular belief that co-operative marketing is the latest development in the co-operative movement.

This is a mistake if by co-operative marketing we mean the producers of a given commodity organizing to sell it for themselves. Swiss cheese makers practised such a method of marketing a couple of centuries ago. They collected milk from a number of producers, the quantity delivered by each man being marked on two pieces of wood, one retained by the producer, the other by the man in charge of the dairy. When the produce was sold the expenses of manufacture were deducted, the manager paid in proportion to the amount handled and the remainder divided among the producers in proportion to the amount they contributed to the whole. This form of co-operative marketing was practised on this continent before the introduction of the consumers' form of co-operation, and it was from the United States that the Danes, about 1880, took the idea of co-operative marketing, improving upon it by the introduction of the contract by which the co-operative was assured of a constant volume.

The best book descriptive of co-operative marketing on this continent is Herman Steen's "Co-operative Marketing: The Golden Rule in Agriculture." This book tells of the development of co-operative marketing of fruit, vegetables, eggs and poultry, dairy products, livestock and grain, and contains a good explanation of the contract pooling system. The chapter on Canada needs now to be supplemented with the story of the Wheat Pools. An earlier book which will repay reading is "Co-operation in Agriculture," by G. Harold Powell. The principles of co-operative marketing are dealt with in most of the textbooks on marketing. Works which may be specially mentioned are: "Co-operative Marketing of Farm Products," by O. B. Jesness, and "Principles and Practice of Co-operative Marketing," by E. G. Mears and M. O. Tobriner.

The most adequate and comprehensive survey of current agricultural co-operation on this continent is contained in "American Co-operation" the publication of The American Institute of Co-operation, 1925, 1926, 1927. These publications are expensive for individual purchase but they should be in libraries to which farmers have access.

Co-operation in the farmers' movements in Canada is dealt with in Dr. Louis Wood's "A History of Farmers'

Movements in Canada" and more specifically in Western Canada, in the newly published "Grain Growers' Co-operation in Western Canada," by Dr. Harald S. Patton. The latter book comes down to the middle of 1927 and covers very fully the history and organization of the Wheat Pools. These two books should be in the library of every farmer who has the interest and welfare of his vocation at heart.

### Denmark

The best book dealing with the development of agricultural co-operation in Denmark is Harold Faber's "Co-operation in Danish Agriculture." A popular account is given in "Denmark: A Co-operative Commonwealth," by Frederick Howe, and Sir H. Rider Haggard wrote enthusiastically about it in "Rural Denmark and Its Lessons." Some of the accounts of Danish co-operation have to be read with caution; there is a tendency to exaggerate the place of co-operation in Danish agriculture. In this connection I must mention a recent book which every leader in rural activities should read, "The Folk High Schools of Denmark and the Development of a Farming Community," by three Danish educationists, Messrs. Begtrup, Lund and Manniche, the English translation of which contains an introduction by Sir Michael Sadler.

### Russia

Russia, during the last few years, has furnished much material for students of social science, and not least of these, those who are particularly interested in co-operation. Some interesting experiments have been tried with co-operative organizations in Russia since the revolution, and it is of practical importance to know just exactly what happened to the co-operative movement and what its position is today. It might be said that the whole of the farming population of Russia is organized in co-operatives, both for buying what the farmers need and selling what the farmers produce. The position of the co-operative organizations in Russia since the revolution is the subject of a study, "The Co-operative Movement in Soviet Russia," by the International Labor Office of the League of Nations. A co-operator's view of the co-operative movement in Russia is that of

Elsie Terry Blanc in "The Co-operative Movement in Russia." This book was published in 1924 and treats the co-operative movement as a part of the general democratic movement in Russia and brings its history right down to the introduction of the new economic policy of Lenin, who, it may be mentioned, was firmly of the opinion that no socialist regime could be successful in Russia which did not work with the co-operatives and without destroying their fundamental character. Time proved that Lenin was right.

### Other European Co-operatives

Another country which has been much in the international limelight during recent years is Italy. Co-operative journals have fairly boiled over in their denunciation of the Fascist onslaught on the co-operative societies. The Fascist reply is that the co-ops were centres of anti-nationalism, syndicalism, and communism. A reliable review of the situation is contained in E. A. Lloyd's "The Co-operative Movement in Italy, with special reference to Agriculture, Labor and Production," which is published by the Fabian Society. A stimulating book is "Guilds and Co-operatives in Italy," by Odon Por, which contains an introduction by A. E. (G. W. Russell) and an appendix by G. D. H. Cole. These names ought to furnish recommendation enough for any reformer!

And talking about A. E. brings me to Ireland. No co-operator can afford to be without an acquaintance with A. E., one of the finest idealists in the whole co-operative movement and a pioneer in the "better farming, better business, better living" movement instituted in Ireland by Sir Horace Plunkett. His inspiring book, "The National Being," in which he makes the principle of co-operation the basis of a national civilization, is one of the finest pieces of co-operative literature in the English language. More prosaic because it is descriptive of activities is "Co-operation in Ireland," by L. Smith-Gordon and C. O'Brien, which is one of a series describing co-operation in many countries issued by the British Co-operative Union. The others in the series are "Co-operation in Many Lands," "Co-operation in Denmark" and "Co-operation in Scotland." The

series constitutes a real encyclopaedia on the co-operative movement.

For Germany the newest book is Dr. Theodore Cassau's "The Consumers' Movement in Germany," which also deals with the relation of the movement to the general workers' movement. Speaking of Germany reminds one that it is the home of co-operative credit, a form of co-operation about which there is a voluminous literature and stacks of government reports. "People's Banks," by H. W. Wolff, tells the whole story of this phase of co-operative enterprise.

The books mentioned herein are only a small selection from those available to Pool members in the Pool library. Co-operators ought to learn of their movement, master its philosophy, realize its magnitude and social significance and meet on the printed page the men who laid its foundations, those who guided it through troublous times and those who are its leaders today. Nor is it enough to study the co-operative movement by itself; it should be studied in its setting as part of the great democratic movement toward an order of social justice. The Pool library has been built up to give facilities for this wider and deeper study, and it should be used to the fullest extent by Pool members. As our agricultural co-operatives increase and prosper more and more attention must be given to the fundamental concepts of co-operation; co-operators must know more about the foundations and the structure of the movement not only that they may meet successfully the opposition from the old order, but that they may be enabled to give of their best to the great task of modern civilization—the intelligent ordering of human happiness.



